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171611Z Nov 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 008701

SIPDIS

NSC STAFF FOR SINGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/17/2015

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SUBJECT: EGYPT: RESULTS OFFICIAL FOR THE FIRST STAGE OF
PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

REF: CAIRO 8663 AND PREVIOUS

Classified by ECPO Minister Counselor Michael Corbin, for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶11. (C) The Chairman of the Parliamentary Elections Commission has formally announced the results of the first of three stages of Egypt's People's Assembly elections. The numbers track with "unofficial" results in circulation yesterday (reftel), including an acknowledged win of 34 seats for the MB, doubling their representation in only the first round. A senior NDP contact described the results so far as a "serious blow" to reformers in the party and admitted they had been taken by surprise by the MB's electoral strength. One of Cairo's most seasoned observers of the MB predicted that their run in the next two rounds would be equally strong, bringing their presence to as many as 90 seats in the 444 seat assembly. End summary.

Official Results

¶12. (SBU) Minister of Justice Mahmoud Aboul Leil, who is serving as Chairman of the Parliamentary Elections Commission, announced the official results of the first stage of People's Assembly elections at a press conference on the afternoon of November 17.

¶13. (SBU) The numbers announced by Aboul Leil tracked with the figures we presented in ref A, although 46 "NDP renegades," members of the party who ran successfully as independents after they failed to get the party's nomination, have already returned to the fold, and are now being counted in the NDP's winners' column.

¶14. (U) Aboul Leil confirmed the following results, of 164 PA seats at stake in the first round:

NDP.....114 (69.7 percent)

MB.....34 (20.7 percent)

Independents.....8 (4.8 percent)

Opposition parties.....8 (4.8 percent)

¶15. (SBU) In a brief question and answer session that followed, Aboul Leil reaffirmed the Electoral Commission's commitment to allow domestic civil society monitors to oversee the process. He said that the Commission had taken note of numerous complaints and comments about the process and asserted that they would be duly investigated and acted upon as appropriate.

NDP Vexed by MB Strength

¶16. (C) Karim Haggag, a principal aide to Gamal Mubarak, told ECPO Counselor that the results of the first stage had been "a serious blow to reformers" in the NDP. The defeat of Gamal confidante Hossam Badrawi was an especially bitter pill to swallow, he confided. On the MB's strong performance, already doubling their representation in parliament in only the first of three stages, Haggag admitted the NDP had been caught by surprise. The NDP had done extensive polling in canvassing across the country, he noted, but their research had completely failed to gauge the extent of MB support.

¶17. (C) Mohammed Salah, Cairo bureau chief of the regional daily Al-Hayat, known for his precient analyses and good contacts with the MB, told poloff that the Brothers themselves were "astonished" by their performance. He anticipated that the MB will fare equally well in the next two rounds, possibly reaching as many as 90 seats in the 444 seat People's Assembly. He downplayed the possibility that

the GOE might crackdown on the relatively open atmosphere of the first round to curb MB gains (as the GOE did in 2000), noting that the overall political atmosphere was no longer conducive to iron-fisted tactics.

RICCIARDONE